

THE PRESIDENCY

"I Need to Talk"

"Why don't you all come in my office after lunch and we'll have a—what do you call it—an impromptu press conference," said the President to White House reporters one morning last week.

At 4:10 that afternoon, 150 newsmen stood shoulder to shoulder in the oval office for one hour and 33 minutes while Lyndon Johnson, not inhibited by the presence of television, lounged comfortably behind his desk—and talked on and on and on about every subject under the moon.

First, the President urged those in the back of the room to speak up if

business of selecting mayors for any cities." He discussed other nations' non-payment of U.N. debts ("We are very concerned"), the exchange of information between U.S. and Soviet atomic scientists ("It has furthered our hope that science can serve as a common ground between East and West"), and reductions in Government employees ("down something like over 4,000"). Among other subjects covered:

• CRITICISM OF U.S. POLICY IN VIET NAM.

The President recalled a story once told to him by Louisiana's Huey Long. It was about a farmer who couldn't sleep at night because of "frogs barking in the pond." The farmer was so irked by the noise that finally "he went out and

don't intend to, but we are not going to be buried ourselves."

• **THE BALANCE-OF-PAYMENTS PROBLEM.** Administration efforts to cut the flow of dollars through Government spending abroad have slashed the net balance-of-payments drain from federal expenditures by 23%, or \$635 million, since June 1963. By 1967 those costs will drop another 13%. "These improvements," said the President, "have been obtained without sacrificing essential U.S. commitments abroad."

• **BUDGET DEFICITS.** June estimates indicated that tax revenues were going to be \$1.6 billion higher than anticipated for the fiscal year ending June 30, and that federal spending would be down about \$900 million from what was predicted. Said Johnson: "The budget deficit, therefore, will be only \$3.8 billion—which is \$2.5 billion less than the \$6.3 billion we estimated in our January budget. I know this is good news to all of you who look forward, as we do, to a balanced budget in the years ahead. I said plural—'years.'"

• **ON JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS.** Two vacancies on the nine-judge Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals—a key court in civil rights cases because it includes Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas—will be filled "very shortly" by an old Johnson friend, Texan Homer Thornberry, and by a former Mississippi Governor (1956-60), James P. Coleman. Thornberry, a federal district judge in Austin since 1963, succeeded Johnson in the House of Representatives in 1948 when Lyndon was elected a Senator. In the House, he was a Johnson-Rayburn-type moderate. Coleman is a segregationist—but far from a rabid redneck. He was a supporter of John Kennedy, lost a 1963 attempt to return to the governorship after his opponents labeled him "a weak sister trying to find the middle ground on segregation." Thornberry will replace retired Judge Joseph C. Hutcheson Jr., who usually voted with the pro-civil rights bloc on the court, and Coleman will replace the late Judge Ben F. Cameron, a strong segregationist. Thus the 5 to 4 edge held in the past by pro-integrationists on the court will likely remain.

Festival of the Arts

From museums in 40 states came 39 paintings and 26 sculptures, and from the elite in the worlds of art, literature, photography, dance, music and drama came some 400 guests—a collection of art works and talent that could not begin to be measured in monetary terms. Lady Bird Johnson opened the affair with a gracious little speech: "A festival is a time for feasting, and there is a rich feast indeed before us today. The arts will be presented in many forms, all of which are warmly welcome in this house."

Bronze Nude & Car Bumpers. The house, of course, was the White House, and the occasion was that extraordinary



JOHNSON AT PRESS CONFERENCE

An extraordinarily uninhibited what-do-you-call-it.

they could not hear. But when a woman correspondent complained, "Sir, we don't hear a word," the President bawled back jocularly, "Good!" Later, with a grin, he admonished the newsmen: "Now won't you all quit writing these stories—'Won't anybody say no to L.B.J.' Because I have more people running around here saying no." The President read prepared statements for nearly half an hour, then set a 20-minute limit on the question-and-answer period. But when the time was up, he said buoyantly, "I'll give you five more minutes because I need to talk." He did—for a lot more than five minutes.

He announced that Army Secretary Stephen Ailes, appointed in January 1964, would resign July 1, and that Under Secretary Stanley R. Resor would replace him (TIME, May 28). He spoke of the hopes of former Commerce Under Secretary Franklin Roosevelt Jr. in the New York mayoralty race: "He performed a very valuable service to this Administration, but I am not in the

drained the pond and killed both frogs." Said the President: "We aren't going to kill anybody, but we recognize the frogs and the ponds and they keep us awake sometimes. That is the freedom we love." Johnson added, "I have been around Congress too long—35 years—not to understand that there are going to be different viewpoints."

• **THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.** When a reporter from the Polish newspaper Trybuna Ludu asked Johnson for his assessment of the situation, the President clenched a fist, glared at the newsmen and said: "Some 1,500 innocent people were murdered and shot, and their heads cut off, and six Latin American embassies were violated and fired upon over a period of four days before we went in. We didn't start that. We didn't intervene. We didn't kill anyone. We didn't violate any embassies. We were not the perpetrators, but after we saw what had happened we took the necessary precautions, as I have said so often, and as I repeat again: 'We do not want to bury anyone. We